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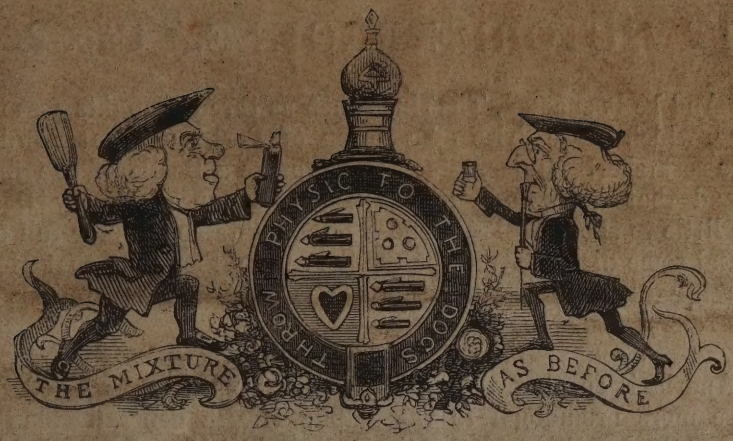


THE SOCIAL PARLIAMENT.

Act the Second.

ANNO XI° ET XII°

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

CAP. 2.

An Act for Promoting the Public Health in Towns and Elsewhere.

[*December*, 1848.]

Laments the Time wasted, in the last Session, by debating Bores.

WHEREAS, a Bill relating to the Health of Towns having been passed on the thirty-first Day of August, 1848; but whereas, moreover, the Time which ought to have been occupied in carrying it out more fully, having been entirely taken up by loquacious Members, who may, after the Fashion of Rabelais, (aptly enough set forth by Urquhart,) be styled Do-nothing Wranglers, Doddypoll Dawdlers, Wordy Sputterers, Tongue Wearers, Self-listening Cacklers, Windy Spinners, Gold-beating Platitudinarians, Gossamer-brained Knownothings, Flimsy Squabblers, and so on:

The Railway Librarians to have great Power in bringing the Act into general Popularity and Operation.

II. May it, therefore, again please the Nobility, Gentry, and Public in general, that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, with the Advice and Consent of sundry strong-minded Persons capable of judging, That as soon as Anybody shall have bought this Act, either at an established Shop, or of a Steam-boat Newsvendor, or at the terminal Library of a Railway; either from the intelligent Mr. Jenkins, at the Great Western; or the ingenious Messrs. Smith, of the London and Birmingham, and Eastern Counties; or the clear-headed Mr. Connolly, of the Brighton or Dover; or the active Mr. Bowen, of the South Western; or the bustling Mr. Thurman, at Kingston—not to forget the judicious Librarian of the Blackwall—that as soon as the Act has been there purchased, it may come into Operation.

[*Price Threepence.*]

No Comparison between the Contents of Doctors' Bottles and London Porter, or fine Old Port.

III. And be it enacted, That inasmuch as three Draughts cost four and sixpence, which is the Price of a dozen of Porter, or that Powders and Mixture cost six Shillings, which will procure a Bottle of the finest old Port; and that a Doctor's Bill is usually an unsatisfactory Document, leaving little to show for it beyond a Dressing-table Drawer full of small Corks and some dirty Bottles for the Servants; therefore, that Health be considered really an Object of some Consequence, and every means adopted for its Preservation.

All Accidents prejudicial to Public Health may be immediately Abolished.

IV. And be it enacted, to begin with, That inasmuch as Accidents of all sorts are more prejudicial to the Public Health generally than passive Nuisances, the Local Boards be directed to abolish, as far as lies in their Powers, the following Causes of Injury:

Class 1.—Broad-wheeled Waggons passing the Kerb of Narrow Footpaths, to the great Distress and Danger of nervous Pedestrians progressing thereon.

Class 2.—Balloon Ascents of various kinds—that is to say, with Lions, Monkeys, Fireworks, Smoking Fast Men, and other dangerous Freights, except the Aeronaut can show that he has the Power of falling, if need be, on soft and convenient Places; but if he cannot control the Descent of himself and Companions, seeing that the Extinguisher Steeple in Langham Place, the dirty Bosom of the Serpentine, the iron Railings of any of the Squares, or the Roofs of the Pantheon and Colosseum Conservatories, are Pitches to be equally avoided, then that all Persons ascending with full Knowledge of the same be found incapable of managing their own Affairs, and considered mad accordingly.

Class 3.—Tubs recklessly let down, according to Custom, from Drays, into the cellars of Licensed Victuallers, whereby Passengers are apt to become entangled in the Ropes, or pushed on by the Barrels, so that they make perilous Descents against their Will into strange Vaults.

Class 4.—Cranes with inadequate Tackle for the due Elevation of heavy Bales committed to them, whereby the Heads of Passers-by are lamentably and violently driven into their Chests by the breaking of the Ropes, which is productive of great Indisposition and Inconvenience.

Class 5.—Slides formed on the Pavement during frosty Weather by fast Boys, which have the effect of disturbing the Gravity of unobservant Pedestrians, without increasing their Merriment.

Class 6.—Waggons piled higher than the second-floor windows of the Streets they pass through, which, overturning, crush By-standers and startle Horses, shoot Bales into Bedrooms, drive Trusses of Hay through Shop-windows, and otherwise generally injure Life and Property.

Class 7.—Rival Omnibuses racing in narrow Streets, in the Hope of gaining the Gentleman as a Passenger, standing at the distant Corner, and eventually running over him.

Cupboard, in Bachelors' Rooms, subject to the Inspection of Commissioners.

V. And be it further enacted, That the description of domestic Donjon Keep, known as Men's Rooms, Lodging-Houses, and small Tenements, as a Cupboard, be constantly inspected by the Commissioners, inasmuch as the confined energies of Apples, Patent Firewood, Pickles, Coffee, Lucifers, forgotten Anchovies, Candles, Musty Decanters, Cheese, treasured Dabs of Butter, and put-by Remnants of Articles of Consumption generally, produce a result anything but promotive of that atmospheric Purity which is essential to the due Nourishment of the Vital Functions.

Street Refreshments of every kind to be minutely Analyzed.

VI. And be it further enacted, That the Commissioners have Power to seize on and get rid of all kinds of pickled Whelks, cheap Plums, Mammoth Oysters, green Apples, Curds and Whey, Eel Pies, globular Radishes, Penny Ham Sandwiches, and other Refreshments popular amongst "The People," and sold at Stalls, whereby the digestive Organs are grievously deranged, and Dispensary Assistants harassed into Fevers.

Railway Directors answerable for Colds caught in Open Carriages.

VII. And be it enacted, That all Railway Directors not providing covered Trains for third-class Passengers be liable to Transportation, all along their Line, in wet Weather, and in the aforesaid Trains, without Umbrellas. And that Passengers catching Colds in such open Trains be allowed to make out their own bills upon the Company, and charge therein for Time lost, Clothes spoiled, Constitution undermined, and all consequent or collateral Injuries and Disadvantages resulting from such Exposure.

Agricultural Travellers not empowered to pull up all the Windows of Trains.

VIII. And be it further enacted, That as pure Air is essential above all things to Health, some Plan be adopted whereby Travellers by the Second-class carriages of Railways may be prevented from pulling all the Shutters up, and stewing, so to speak, in their own Steam. And that, as this Practice is singularly prevalent amongst worthy Agriculturists going up to Mark Lane by the early Monday Trains: be it enacted, That any Yeoman saying, "I like's to be snoog!" and pulling up the last Window thereupon—he smiling as though he had said or done a crafty Thing—be reported to the Guard at the next Station, and promoted to the Luggage Truck.

Theatres and Conversaziones to be controlled as to numbers.

IX. And be it further enacted, That in public Places of Entertainment, known as Theatres, People having paid to the Pit be not only allowed to see, but also to breathe: and that at crowded Conversaziones, every Accommodation be provided for Guests overcome by the Heat; and that Hosts and Hostesses be compelled to take out a Licence as to the number of Persons their Rooms will properly carry; and that if additional Visitors are introduced, over and above this Number, then that the Host pay a certain Fine for each, to be hereafter agreed upon.

Certificates of Health to be procured by Steam-boat Voyagers.

X. And be it enacted, That as Sickness is the main Thing to be guarded against in a Bill purporting to improve the public Health, so no one be allowed to take Sea-Voyages—in which is included the Passage from the Nore to Ramsgate even—without a Certificate from Captain Monger or Captain Paul that the Subject has gone with them from Folkstone to Boulogne, and *vice versâ*, without Indisposition.

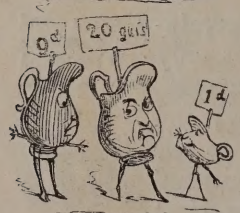
All Things People are Sick of, to be annihilated.

XI. And be it further (and especially) enacted, That as we are constantly hearing of "Things People are sick of," the following Subjects, forming the leading ones coming under that Category, be immediately put down:

1. Irish Patriots of every Description, who, like Irish Characters in funny Plays, have had their Day, and are no longer believed in. And that Irish Speeches be paid no more Attention to than the Expressions "By my sowl!" and "Are ye there now, my darlint?" and "Broth of a Boy!" together with every "Och hone!" "Whack!" "Arrah, be aisy now! and "Wirrastroo!" (or whatever it is) already indulged in. And that this be paid the greater Attention to, inasmuch as the Mass of Irishmen having got a conventional Character on the Stage, think they must always bring the same into private Life, which is generally offensive, and always a Nuisance. These Remarks must not be taken as applicable to many clever Irish Gentlemen, whom it is delightful and an Honour to meet, but only to Milesian Gents, who form unfortunately a large Body.

2. Ramsgate, considered as an agreeable Place for autumnal Relaxation; unless something is provided for popular Amusement beyond meeting dreary People on the Pier, (aiming at turning out smart, in tail Coats before Dinner:) reading thumbed Novels on the Sands; listening to bad Music; or winning useless Library-Ware at Raffles.

3. Shakspeare's House at Stratford-upon-Avon; that no more Money may be dragged out of the Pockets of the Public for its Preservation, inasmuch as there is not the slightest Proof that our great Poet was ever born there; but that the Money raised be expended in publishing his Plays at the smallest possible Price, that Everybody may have a Copy, and by making themselves acquainted with his glorious and immortal Works, find far more pleasure in thinking upon, and repeating, his divine Philosophy to themselves, than hearing it spoken aloud at Theatres by Persons of more or less Intelligence, apart from their Profession, paid certain Sums to learn and spout it.



4. Legitimate Dramas—the Taste for which has been so long declining, that it is quite Time they were knocked on the Head altogether: and indeed Objects of "High Art" generally, which are usually of a misty and incomprehensible Nature, and being considered the more lofty the farther they are removed from exciting any natural Sympathies, may be advantageously dispensed with. In this latter Category may be comprised all Ten Guinea Milk Jugs and Five Pound Paper Knives; together with all Shaving Pots, Bread Platters, Inkstands, and Salt-Cellars, sold at absurd and preposterous Prices.

5. "The People," by whom was formerly meant that class of Society known as "Tag-Rag and Bobtail," but latterly comprises those intelligent Artisans who arm themselves with Coal-scuttles to fire Warehouses and murder the Police.

6. The National Gallery as a building.

Purity of the Thames Water to be obtained at any cost.

XII. And be it enacted, That inasmuch as pure Water is conducive to Health everywhere, the following Analysis, by a learned Chemist, of a certain Quantity of the Thames be closely studied: that is to say, he found—

In a Hogshead of Thames Water

Old Corks	27
Untimely-ended domestic Animals	3
Maltreated Saucepans	2½
Shoes beyond repair	7
Flooded-out Rats	1
Bad Nuts	13

N.B.—Sewage and Mud has not been taken into consideration in this Analysis, as it pervades the Quantity generally in Proportion to the State of the Tide.

Quack Medicines of every Description, with their Vendors, to go to the Dogs.

XIII. And be it further, and most especially enacted, That to bring about a strict Sanitary Condition of the Public, all Medicines promulgated by Persons not endowed with a thoroughly Medical Education be strictly suppressed, except the Proprietors thereof appear every Morning at their nearest Police Office, and swallow a full Dose of their Nostrums before a sitting Magistrate. And that all Quack Physic-mongers styling themselves "Professors" be classed with Professor Risley the Tumbler; Professor Browne the Wig-maker; Professor Keller the Pose Plastique, and other People who have no Right to the Title. And that all "consulting Surgeons" who advertise, be ordered to show their Diplomas, in order that it may be seen whether they are recognised Medical Men, or the Filth and Scum of Society.

Vauxhall to be put under proper Restraint, with respect to the Weather.

XIV. And be it enacted also, That inasmuch as War, kept up from Time immemorial, between the Proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens and the Clerk of the Weather, is productive of much Inconvenience to the former, who has more cold Water thrown upon his Efforts to please than Anybody else, some Restriction be placed upon his Power to open the Grounds under any circumstances of expected Wet. For as People usually regard Vauxhall as a Summer Place of *al fresco* Entertainments, and attire accordingly to go there, the Rain is often productive of the most serious Consequences to a perfect Sanitary Condition both of the Pocket and Constitution. That is to say:

1. Folks are driven from the open Tables behind the Orchestra, where they can have a Supper of Bread and Cheese and Stout, in the Dark, for a Shilling, into the Boxes, where it is not becoming to order anything under a cold Fowl, a dish of Ham, and a pint of Sherry between two, the which, with Bread and Waiter, comes to Half a Sovereign.
2. They are obliged, in their love of Melody, to stand on wet Ground to hear the funny Singers in the Orchestra; and afterwards, under similar Disadvantages, to sit in the Wet, upon damp Benches, and look at the Fireworks.
3. There is a dispiriting effect in an Illumination Lamp struggling against Rain, which tends to Melancholy and Suicidal Thoughts.
4. Cabs from Vauxhall to anywhere never cost less than Half-a-Crown, and the Bridge Turnpike is Fourpence.

The Popular Revolutionary Air of "We won't go Home till Morning" to be forthwith suppressed.

XV. And be it further enacted, That inasmuch as the Airs of the *Marseillaise*, and also the *Mourir pour la Patrie*, have been forbidden, in high Quarters, to be played by the Bands, as likely to excite revolutionary Minds, so also that the English national Air of "*We won't go Home till Morning*" be also forbidden to be sung; inasmuch, also, as its enthusiastic Execution leads ardent Gents to do absurd Things, very injurious to their Health, and likely to lead to the most serious Consequences; (that is to say,)

Colds and Coughs, from forgetting or losing the Young Man's Best Companion, or Latch-Key, and being kept in the Rain, at four in the Morning.

Phrenitis, or Inflammation of the Brain, from indulging in that peculiar Wine served everywhere after Midnight, especially in hot Negus, which is likely to be followed by

Hemorrhage, or Effusion of Blood, either from the facial or occipital Arteries, through the Fists of Gentlemen holding Opinions hostile to the Patient, or the Staff of a Policeman incapable of making an Impression by Remonstrance.

Typhus, or low Fever, caught in the cells of Police Offices, which are usually constructed with a greater Regard for Security than Comfort, and hold and harbour evil Influences, their usual Occupants being Members of that Class of Nature's Nobility known as "The Great Unwashed."

Disease of the Chest, by which is typified an impoverished State of the Treasury—the same being brought about by Fines for being intoxicated, Compensation for damaged Knockers, and Excavation Lanterns, and Gentish Tomfoolery generally.

Cheap Cigars, and the Snobs who smoke them, to be put down.

XVI. And be it enacted, That the Commissioners have orders to arrest all Persons smoking bad Cigars in the open Air, to the Pollution of the same, and Annoyance of Passengers generally. And that as the Practice is in a great Measure confined to Sunday Snobs and early-closing Shopboys, a general Knowledge of the same will tend much to its Discontinuance, inasmuch as the Proportion of those who smoke because they think it fine is to those who smoke because they like it, as twelve to one; and that the Commissioners for the Abolition of Smoke in Towns be empowered to have an Authority over cheap Cigars as they have over Chimneys, both being equally offensive and prejudicial to the Public Health.

Public Works of Art to be provided for the People to mutilate.

XVII. And be it enacted, That inasmuch as Clause 74 of the Act empowers the Board to provide Places of Public Recreation, so the same be immediately started; and that, to add to the Health of the People, by Exercise and Content, Statues be put up, in the said Public Walks, for them to knock the Noses and Fingers off, and scribble over; and rare Flowers be introduced for them to pick and gather; and handsome cast-iron Railings put up for them to demolish or disfigure, all which Diversions tend greatly to the popular Salubrity.

A sufficient Supply of Water to be provided, consonant with popular Propensities.

XVIII. And be it enacted, That a sufficient supply of Water be everywhere provided, but that, inasmuch as Washing is the last Use to which the People willingly and spontaneously apply it, such Means of distributing it be ordered as most consonant to their Propensities, (that is to say,)

Water Plugs, which afford great Amusement to the Children of the People, and habituate them to Wet Clothes and Feet, whereby their Constitutions are hardened.

Frequent Fires, which induce Exercise amongst the same Class, who will run any Distance, however vague or long, after an Engine.

Public Fountains, such as those in Trafalgar Square, which appear to be solely used or enjoyed by the Boys, to wash their Hands in, under the pretence of casting Water at each other.

Pools and Ponds, to bathe Dogs in on Sunday Mornings, and provide cheap Shower-Baths for the Bystanders.

Hydrophobia to be guarded against by certain Precautions.

XIX. And be it further enacted, whilst on the Subject, That inasmuch as *Hydrophobia* is a Disease considerably at variance with the Public Health, so all means be taken to utterly extinguish it amongst Dogs; and that, hereafter, no Dog shall be made to look absurd in a Coat and Collar on Punch's Show, and have his Tail pinched in order that he may yelp at the right Moment, when a Question as to his Ownership arises between Mr. Punch and the Gentleman who objects to the constant ringing of a Sheep-Bell before his House, such being likely to goad any sensible Animal on to Madness.

All manner of Nuisances to be forthwith put down.

XX. And be it enacted, That Local Boards be empowered to put down every Class of Nuisances that may be complained of, which annoy and irritate, and bring on actual Indisposition and Nervous Irritability; such as,

1. All Organs that play the Post-Horn Galop like a Hymn; as well as all Organs out of tune; or two Organs together playing different Tunes.

2. All People with nothing to do, who "just look in upon you as they are passing by;" and think you are in the same state of Idleness; and, more especially, all People who, having some Notion that you Write occasionally, have got "a capital Thing to tell you—just in your Line—that you could make a famous Article out of." And *most especially*, all amateur Writers who bring you MS. Papers or Plays, which they first expect you to read, and then to forward with a Note of Introduction to a Publisher or Manager, by which nothing, in the Memory of real Authors, has ever been accomplished.

3. All Gangs of Distressed Mechanics, wandering miserable about the Streets, and informing the Public, in discordant Notes, that "they are Poor Men from Manchester, and got no Work to do."

4. *Country Friends*, who make you come and stay with them, and on the Morning of your Departure, by some prevalent Lunacy, insist, in defiance of Clocks and Bradshaw, that you have plenty of Time to get to the Station. This Love of your Society ends in

your running to the Line with your Breakfast in your Throat, and seeing the Train go off as you approach it, or suffering from Indigestion in London all Day afterwards.

5. Lectures at Literary Institutions beyond one Hour in Duration, which is quite as long as anybody's Attention can be kept alive without the aid of Dissolving Views, or John Parry; and Elocution Classes generally, whenever it can be ascertained by careful, unbiassed Scrutiny, that their Object is not to encourage Propriety in Speaking, but to enable a few Gents to spout and show off before a hapless Audience of Members' Friends; and inasmuch as innumerable Persons are met with in Society, who have an agreeable manner of Speaking, without being able to jump upon a Platform, and give whole Chapters from comic Novels by Heart, or do "Box and Cox," or "Hohenlinden," as Helps to future Oratory, it is better that such should be at once stopped, without Right of Appeal.

Lending this Act not recommended.

XXI. And be it finally enacted, That any Person or Persons purchasing this Act be instructed not to Lend it to Friends, but to recommend such to Purchase it, in order that more Copies may be diffused, and the Author and Public generally thus be all benefited thereby.

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